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ACTION BY THE UNITED NATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORLD POPULATION CONFERENCE, 1974: MONITORING OF POPULATION TRENDS AND POLICIES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON AGE STRUCTURE

Concise report on the monitoring of world population trends and policies, with special emphasis on age structure

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

As called for by the Population Commission at its twenty-fifth session, the present report covers past trends and future prospects of the age structure of population and provides a factual basis for investigating their economic and social implications. The focus of the report is not limited to growth of the elderly population but considers age distribution in its entirety in a broad framework of global and historical changes in age structure.

* E/CN.9/1991/1.

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I. AGE STRUCTURE

1. The proportion of the world population aged 65 and over is estimated to have increased from 5 per cent in 1950 to 6 per cent in 1990, and is projected to reach 10 per cent in 2025. The proportion of the world population under age 15, on the other hand, increased from 35 per cent in 1950 to 38 per cent in 1965, then decreased to 32 per cent in 1990. It is projected to decline further to 25 per cent in 2025.

2. The purpose of this special report is to review past trends and future prospects of the age structure and to provide a factual basis for investigating their economic and social implications. The focus of the report will not be limited to growth of the elderly population but considers age distribution in its entirety in a broad framework of global and historical age structure changes. The discussion will be centred on demographic situations and prospects. Their economic and social impacts, which vary considerably according to country-specific circumstances, are beyond the scope of this special monitoring report.

A. Age structure changes in the past, 1950-1990

3. The demographic transition, which is a shift from high to low levels of fertility and mortality, changes the age structure of a population from a young to an old-age distribution. Fertility decline reduces the proportion of children and mortality decline raises the likelihood to survive up to old ages. The shape of the population pyramid thus changes from one with a wide base and narrow top to a steeply-sloped, barn-shaped form. This dichotomous scheme, however, is too simple for describing the dynamics of actual changes in the age distribution. For purposes of this discussion, a three-stage model is used; the stages are identified by the timing of the onset of a sustained fertility decline. All countries thus are grouped into three categories in terms of the timing of significant fertility decline: not started by 1990, started between 1950 and 1990, and started before 1950. The three groups are called pre-initiation countries, late-initiation countries, and early-initiation countries, respectively.

4. The first group comprises countries that have not started significant decline from uncontrolled, high levels of fertility. In order to determine countries that fall into this category, a total fertility rate (TFR) of 5.0 is chosen as a threshold. Thus, countries where the quinquennial TFR remained above 5.0 for 1950-1990 belong to this group. Countries whose TFR dropped below 5.0 only temporarily due to some catastrophic events are included as well.

5. A number of countries started a rapid or moderate fertility decline after 1950. These are called late-initiation countries. Countries meeting the following three criteria are included in this group: (a) TFR was above 5.0 in or around 1950-1955; (b) TFR was below 5.0 in 1985-1990; and (c) TFR fell by more than 1.5 children from 1950-1955 to 1985-1990. In fact, all countries that meet (a) and (b) happened to satisfy (c) also.

6. The last group is composed of countries that started a significant fertility decline prior to 1950. They are called early-initiation countries. In the majority of these countries, trajectories of the TFR during the past four decades are very low: TFR was 4.0 or below in 1950-1955 and 2.5 or below in 1985-1990.

7. The classification was not designed to be necessarily exhaustive. However, in practice, all countries for which TFR estimates are available for 1950-1990 belong to one of the three categories.

8. The pre-initiation countries constitute 17 per cent of the world population in 1990. The late-initiation group, including China and India, is the largest. Its share of the world's population in 1990 is 60 per cent. Finally, the population of the early-initiation countries is 23 per cent of the world total in 1990. It is not surprising, therefore, that demographic trends of the late-initiation group are well reflected in demographic trends of the total global population, as will be seen later.

9. The pre-initiation pattern of age distribution trends was followed in Africa, Southern Asia and Western Asia; the late-initiation pattern in Latin America, Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia, and the early-initiation pattern in Northern America, Europe, Oceania and the USSR. Although Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Southern Asia and Western Asia exhibited mixtures of the pre-initiation and late-initiation patterns, the age distribution trends of those regions appear to be dominated mainly by the pre-initiation pattern.

10. Table 1 shows the proportion of population under age 15, aged 15-24, and aged 65 and over, in 1950, 1970, 1990 and 2025. The figures for 2025 are the United Nations medium-variant projections. Figure I displays population pyramids in 1950, 1970 and 1990 for the three groups. Figure II shows estimated and projected changes of the proportional age distributions of the three groups. Eight curves in each box of figure II indicate the proportion of population under age 10, 20, 30, ... and 80. The area between two curves, therefore, shows the proportion of population in the corresponding age group. In general, a downward slope to the right implies that the population becomes older, and a downward slope to the left implies that the population becomes younger.

11. Figure III displays age-specific growth rates of the three different groups during two 20-year periods, 1950-1970 and 1970-1990. The profile of age-specific growth rates is essential for understanding changes in the age distribution: the proportion of population in an age group increases if the population of the age group grows at a higher rate than the total population, and decreases otherwise. Fertility decline and mortality decline affect growth rates of different age groups to different extents, thereby changing the age distribution.

12. Some peaks and troughs shift to the right by 20 years of age from the 1950-1970 curve to the 1970-1990 curve, as ages of corresponding cohorts advance by 20 years. For example, the trough at ages 25-29 on the 1950-1970 curve for early-initiation countries moved to ages 45-49 on the 1970-1990 curve, suggesting a relatively low ratio of the cohort born in 1945-1950, the middle of the Second World War, to the cohort born in 1925-1930. The relatively low ratio of cohort

size was not unexpected because a number of countries in the group were deeply involved in the Second World War and experienced a period of low fertility during the War.

13. The age distribution of the pre-initiation countries was very young in 1950 and became increasingly younger for the period 1950-1990 (figures I and II).

14. As shown in figure II, changes in age distribution in 1950-1970 were greater than those in 1970-1990. Figure III explains why the changes in the age distribution slowed down. For 1950-1970, growth rates tend to be greater at younger ages and the youngest age groups 0-14 exhibited the highest growth rates. However, the cohorts that inflated young age groups in 1950-1970 reached young adult ages and early middle ages in 1970-1990, thereby raising the growth rates of those age groups. In addition, reduction of adult mortality raised the growth rates of late middle ages and old ages. The curve of age-specific growth rates for 1970-1990, therefore, is flatter than that for 1950-1970, implying less change in the age distribution.

Table 1. Estimates and projections of major age distribution by the timing of the initiation of fertility decline, 1950, 1970, 1990 and 2025

Timing of the initiation of fertility decline	1950	1970	1990	2025
	Proportion aged under 15 (percentage)			
Pre-initiation countries	41.7	45.2	45.9	34.1
Late-initiation countries	37.1	41.2	32.8	22.1
Early-initiation countries	27.7	26.6	21.3	17.8
	Proportion aged 15-24 (percentage)			
Pre-initiation countries	18.8	18.4	19.2	20.6
Late-initiation countries	18.8	18.6	20.8	15.0
Early-initiation countries	17.2	16.7	14.8	12.2
	Proportion aged 65 and over (percentage)			
Pre-initiation countries	3.5	3.0	2.8	3.9
Late-initiation countries	3.9	3.9	4.9	9.8
Early-initiation countries	7.6	9.6	12.1	19.0

Source: World Population Prospects, 1990 (United Nations publication, forthcoming).

Figure I. Population pyramids of pre-initiation, late-initiation, and early-initiation countries

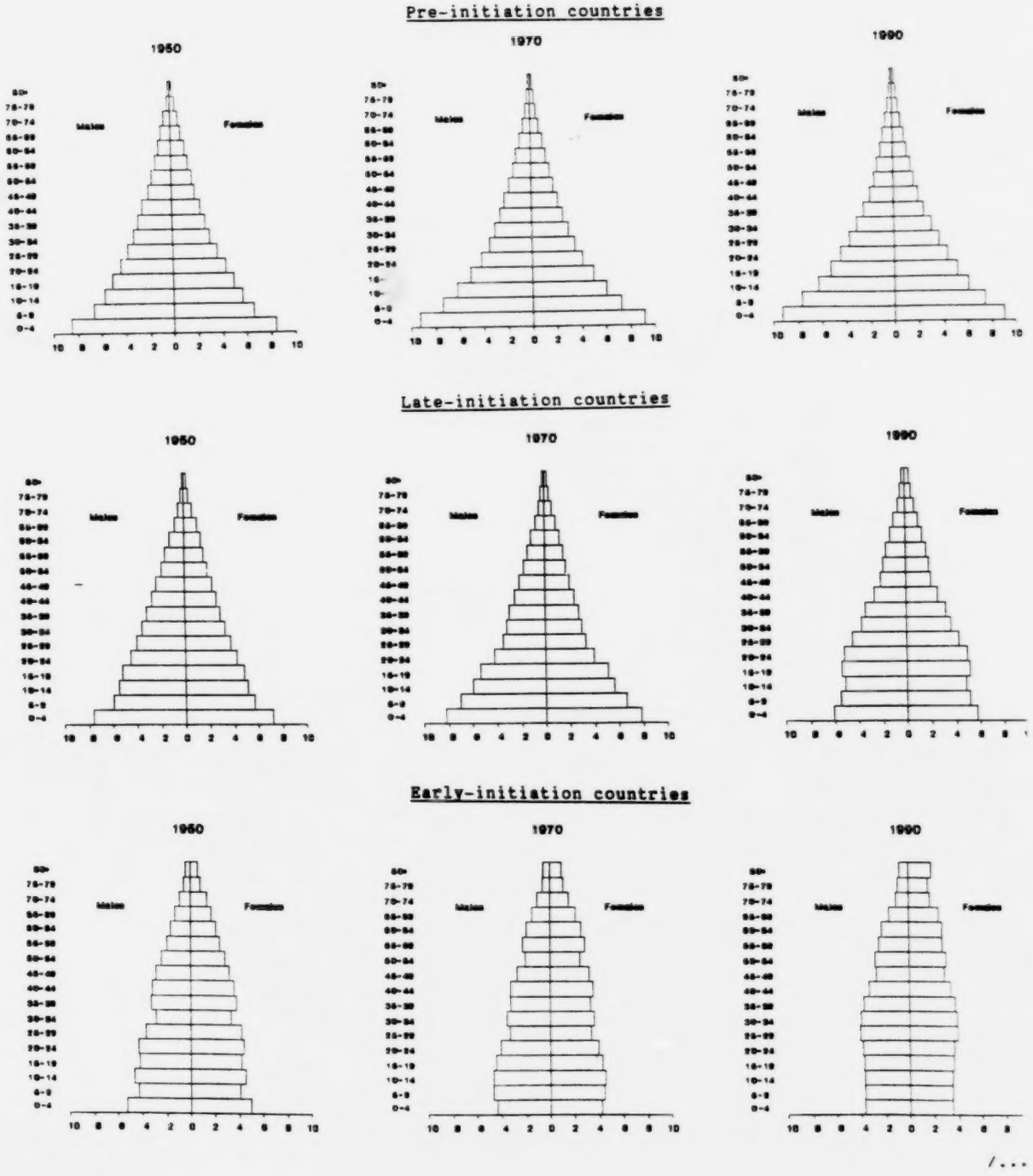

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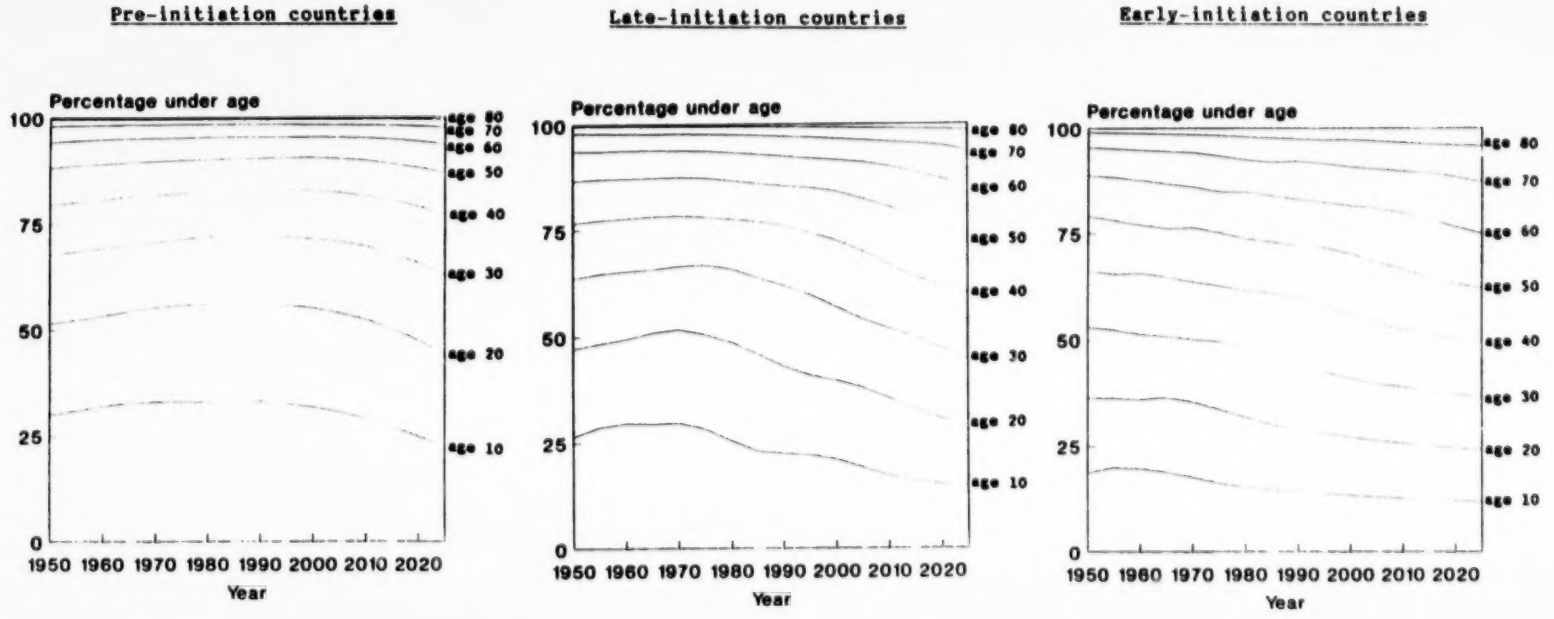
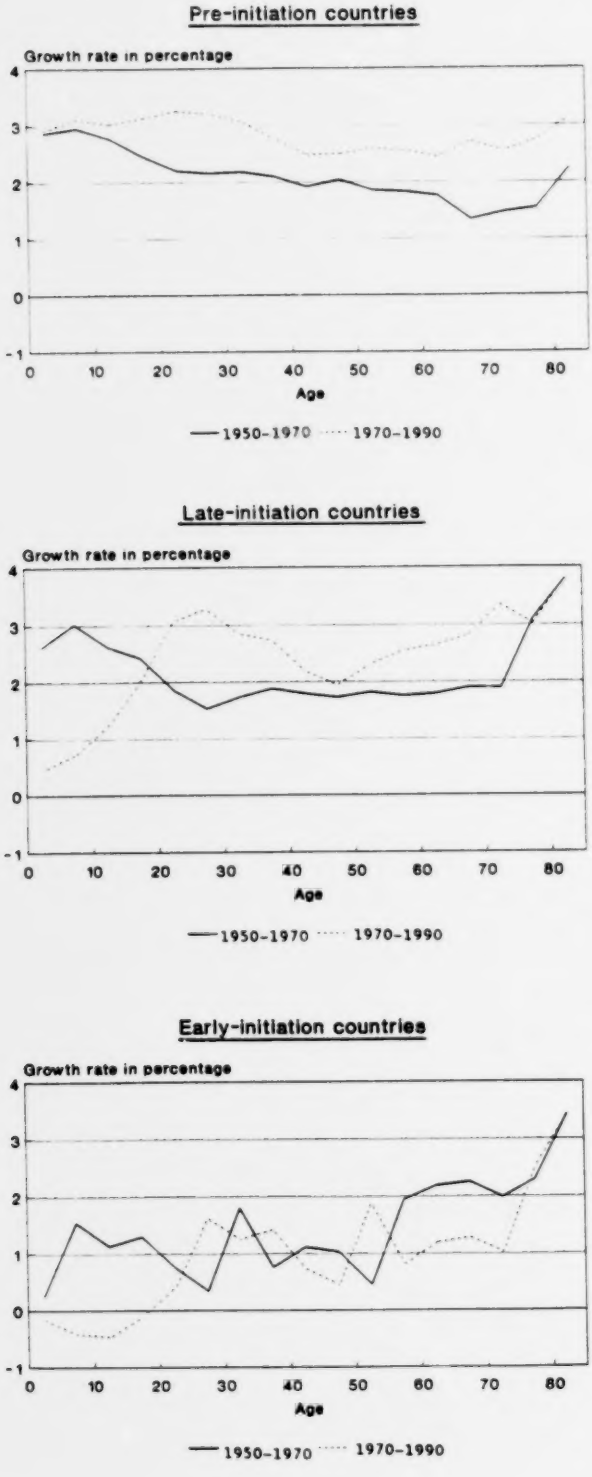
Figure II. Estimated and projected changes in age distribution[a/]



a/ The lowest curve indicates the proportion under age 10; the second lowest curve indicates the proportion under age 20 and so on.

.../

Figure III. Annual age-specific growth rates



15. The trend of age distribution of the late-initiation countries changed its direction around 1970, when those countries, on the average, started fertility declines. Their age distribution had become increasingly younger in the 1950s and 1960s but then became increasingly older in the 1970s and 1980s. The proportion under age 15 increased from 37 per cent in 1950 to 42 per cent in 1970, then declined to 33 per cent in 1990.

16. The proportion aged 65 and over tells a slightly different story. It remained around 4 per cent in the 1950s and 1960s, then rose to 4.9 per cent in 1990. The trends in the 1950s and 1960s do not give a completely consistent picture: the proportion of the elderly remained almost unchanged while the proportion of children increased. Figure II shows, however, that the dominant direction of age distribution was towards younger ages.

17. Dramatic effects of fertility decline after 1970 are clearly shown by the steep slope of the left tail of the 1970-1990 growth rate curve in figure III. All of the annual growth rates of the three youngest five-year age groups were above 2.5 per cent in 1950-1970 but below 1.5 per cent in 1970-1990.

18. Unexpectedly, the proportion of the youth population exhibits a trend that appears to be almost a reversal of that of children. The proportion aged 15-24 decreased from 19 per cent in 1950 to 17 per cent in 1965, then increased to 21 per cent in 1985 and 1990. Again, the trend can be explained by focusing on cohort movements. The rapid growth of population under age 15 in the 1950s and 1960s squeezed the proportion of the other age groups. That population then entered the 15-24-year age group in the 1970s and 1980s, thereby increasing its proportion. It is seen in figure III that a broad peak shifted from ages 0-19 in the 1950-1970 growth rate curve to ages 20-39 in the 1970-1990 curve.

19. Trends of the early-initiation countries are marked by an acceleration of population aging, as shown in figure II. The proportion under age 15 was just 28 per cent in 1950. It rose slightly, to 29 per cent in 1965, reflecting the so-called "baby boom" observed after the Second World War in a number of countries in this group. Then it declined steeply, to 21 per cent in 1990. The proportion aged 65 and over grew rapidly, from 8 per cent in 1950 to 10 per cent in 1970, further to 12 per cent in 1990.

20. The proportion aged 15-24 fluctuated: it dropped from 17 per cent in 1950 to 15 per cent in 1960, moved back to 17 per cent in 1970, then down to 15 per cent in 1990. The fluctuation can be mostly explained by the "baby-boom" cohort's entry into and departure from the age group.

21. Figure III shows several interesting aspects of the changes in age distribution in the early-initiation countries. Effects of fertility decline on the age distribution are clearly indicated by the decline of growth rates for ages under 20 from 1950-1970 to 1970-1990 and the steep slope of the left tail of the 1970-1990 curve. The shift of a broad peak from ages 5-19 in the 1950-1970 curve to ages 25-39 in the 1970-1990 curve indicates the movement of the "baby-boom" cohorts. Growth rates of age groups 55-74 fell from the 1950-1970 period to the 1970-1990 period, mainly due to a shift of cohort pattern of low growth rates.

Finally, the two oldest ages groups, 75-79 and 80 and over, exhibit very high growth rates for both 20-year periods, which is probably attributable to mortality decline, because the growth rates are too high to be explained by cohort movements.

B. Current situation and projections

22. It is estimated that as of the mid-1990s, about one out of every three persons on the earth is a child, one out of five is a person in the late teens or early twenties, and one out of 16 is aged 65 or older. The median age is 24 years, indicating that the world population is still relatively young.

23. Projected changes in age distribution are based on the 1990 revision of the United Nations population projections. A basic assumption of United Nations population projections is that significant fertility declines will begin in countries where fertility has not yet started to fall. The average TFR of the pre-initiation countries is assumed to decline from 6.5 children per woman in 1985-1990 to 3.0 children in 2020-2025. The expected initiation of fertility decline in the pre-initiation countries will trigger an aging of their populations.

24. Fertility declines are mid-way in most late-initiation countries, and the declines are expected to continue. It is assumed that TFRs in the late-initiation countries will fall, on the average, from 3.4 children in 1985-1990 to 2.0 children in 2020-2025, making their populations older.

25. Fertility in the early-initiation countries for the next 35 years is assumed to remain almost constant around a TFR of about 1.9 children. The population aging in those countries, nevertheless, is projected to proceed further, partly because of the assumed continuation of mortality decline and partly because of the "momentum" effects of past fertility decline on future age distributions, which was described in the preceding section.

26. The proportion under age 15 is projected to decrease in all three categories, but the paths of decline from 1990 to 2025 will be in different numerical ranges: from 45 per cent to 34 per cent in the pre-initiation countries, from 33 per cent to 22 per cent in the late-initiation countries, and from 21 per cent to 18 per cent in the early-initiation countries (table 1 and figure IV). These ranges do not overlap, suggesting that they will experience different phases of population aging.

27. The proportion aged 65 and over shown in figure V appears to react to the fertility decline less sensitively than the proportion under age 15. In the pre-initiation countries, the proportion aged 65 and over is projected to increase only slightly, from 2.8 per cent in 1990 to 3.0 per cent in 2010. The increase will become faster after 2010 and reach 3.9 per cent in 2025. The small proportion implies that the pre-initiation countries will still be in an early phase of population aging even 30 years from today. It should be noted that the proportion aged 65 and over in 2020 is projected to be 3.5 per cent, which is a return to the 1950 level.

28. The relative increase of the proportion aged 65 and over will be greatest in the late-initiation countries, where the proportion is projected to double, from 5 per cent in 1990 to 10 per cent in 2025. The increase is projected to be accelerating in 2025, suggesting that it will grow further and probably faster after 2025.

29. The greatest absolute increase in the proportion aged 65 and over is expected in the early-initiation countries, where the proportion will rise from 12 per cent in 1990 to 19 per cent in 2025. In particular, it will grow rapidly during the final 10 years of the projection period, from 16 per cent in 2015 to 19.0 per cent in 2025. The acceleration will occur as age 65 is reached by the "baby-boom" cohorts born during the 1950s in the developed countries that were deeply involved in the Second World War.

30. The projected changes in the age distribution of the world population is an aggregation of these changes in the three groups of countries. The proportion of the world population under age 15 is projected to decrease from 32 per cent in 1990 to 24 per cent in 2025, and the proportion aged 65 and over will increase from 9 per cent in 1990 to 14 per cent in 2025. As in the previous analyses, differentials in the changes projected by the development-related categories are close to those projected by the timing of fertility decline. Projected trends of the aggregated population of the more developed regions will be almost identical to those of the early-initiation countries. The population of the less developed regions combined falls between the late-initiation countries and pre-initiation countries, but closer to the former than the latter. Trends of the least developed countries will be similar to those of the pre-initiation countries, and the aggregated population of the other countries in the less developed regions will follow a path close to that of the late-initiation countries.

31. Considerable geographical differentials in age distribution are projected to remain during the next few decades. Africa will have the highest proportion under age 15 in 2025, which is projected to be 35 per cent. At the other end of the spectrum, the proportion will be about 20 per cent or less in Northern America, Europe, Oceania and the USSR. Located in-between is Latin America, for which the proportion under age 15 is projected to be 26 per cent in 2025. The largest regional variations within a major area are expected for Asia, where the proportion under age 15 in 2025 will range from 23 per cent in Eastern Asia to 31 per cent in Western Asia.

32. The order is reversed for the projected proportion aged 65 and over. The highest proportions of about 20 per cent in 2025 are expected for Northern America and Europe, followed by the USSR (15 per cent) and Oceania (14 per cent). The lowest proportion of 4 per cent is projected for Africa. Again, Latin America (9 per cent) and Asia (10 per cent) will fall between Africa and the major areas composed entirely or predominantly of more developed regions.

33. The population under age 15 in the world is estimated to be 1,710 million in 1990. Among these children, 3 out of 20 live in the more developed regions and 17 out of 20 live in the less developed regions.

Figure IV. Estimated and projected proportion aged under 15 by the timing of the initiation of fertility decline, 1950-2025

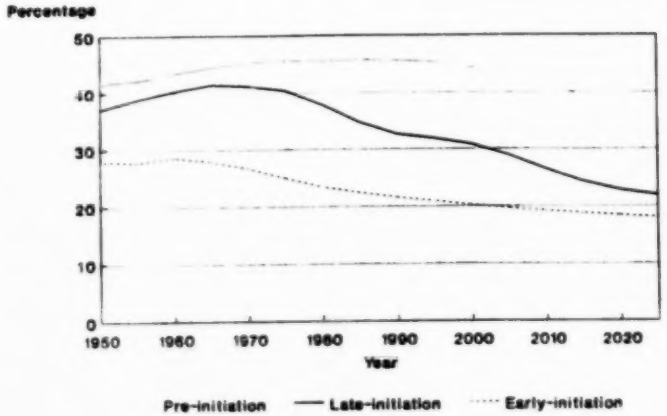


Figure V. Estimated and projected proportion aged 65 and over by the timing of the initiation of fertility decline, 1950-2025

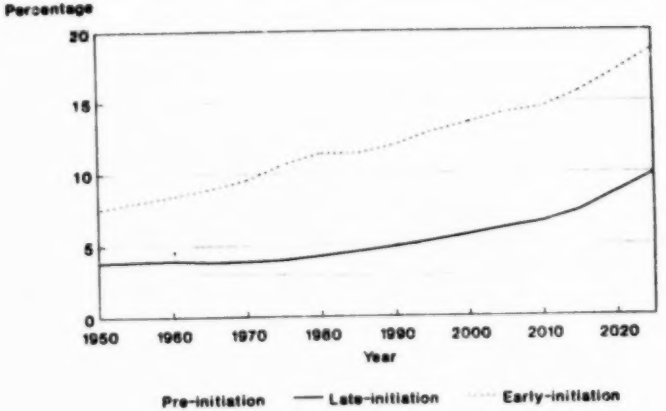


Figure VI. Estimated and projected proportion aged under 15 in the more developed and the less developed regions, 1950-2025

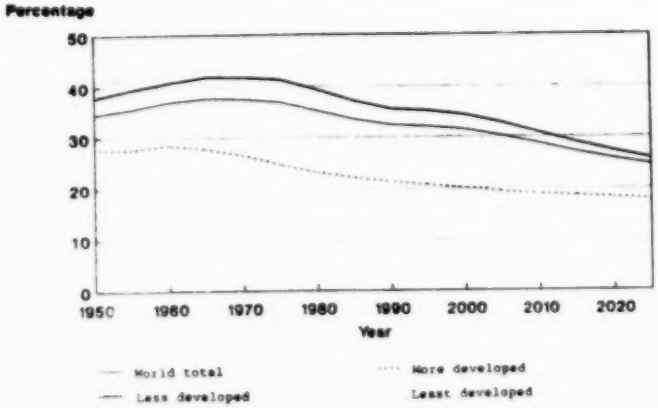
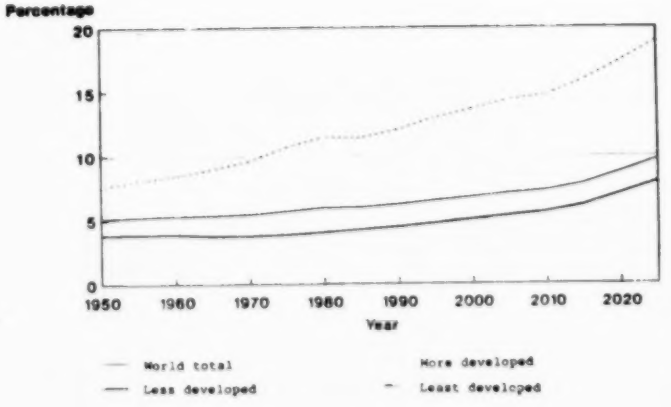


Figure VII. Estimated and projected proportion aged 65 and over in the more developed and the less developed regions, 1950-2025



34. The number of children under age 15 in the world is projected to reach 2 billion a few years after the beginning of the next century and increase further to 2,085 million in 2025 (see figure VIII). The growth is due to the increase of the child population in the less developed regions from 1,453 million in 1990 to 1,844 million in 2025. In contrast, the population under age 15 in the more developed regions is projected to decrease from 257 million in 1990 to 241 million in 2025. As a result of the differential growth, the composition of the world population under age 15 will change. The share of the more developed regions will fall from 15 per cent in 1990 to 12 per cent in 2025, but that of the less developed regions will rise from 85 per cent in 1990 to 88 per cent in 2025. The number of children under age 15 in the least developed countries, will grow steeply by 74 per cent, from 198 million in 1950 to 345 million in 2025. The least developed countries' share of the world child population will rise from 12 per cent in 1990 to 17 per cent in 2025.

35. Figure VIII indicates that the growth of the world child population was fast in the 1950s and 1960s, but relatively slow from the mid-1970s to the present. The growth will become fast again in the 1990s but will slow down after the year 2000. In order to understand the accelerations and decelerations of growth, it should be noted that the trend of population under age 15 tends to echo that of the number of births, with some delay (normally about 7.5 years on the average) and in a more smooth way than the number of births. Firstly, the slow growth of child population from the mid-1970s to 1990 is mainly due to the fertility decline in the late-initiation countries during the 1970s. Secondly, the resumption of the relatively fast growth in the 1990s seems to reflect the slower decline of the world crude birth rate in the 1980s than in the 1970s.

36. Moving to the other end of the age spectrum, the size of the world elderly population is considerably smaller than the size of the world child population. The projected speed of relative increase of the world elderly population, however, is substantially faster than that of the world child population. The number of persons aged 65 and over in the world is estimated to be 328 million in 1990. It is projected to grow to 828 million in 2025, which is more than 2.5 times as large as its current size (figure VII).

37. The composition of the world elderly population is entirely different from that of the child population. About four out of nine persons aged 65 and over live in the more developed regions, and five out of nine in the less developed regions. Although the share of the less developed regions exceeds that of the more developed regions again, their ratio (4:5) is closer to 50:50 than is the ratio for the child population (3:17). The ratio, however, is expected to change considerably. The share of the more developed regions is projected to be reduced to 31 per cent in 2025 and that of the less developed regions is projected to increase to 69 per cent, so that the ratio will become about 3:7. The proportion of the elderly population in the world who are living in the least developed countries is only 4.0 per cent in 1990, and it is projected to rise to 5.0 per cent in 2025.

38. The significant differences in the future trend between the more developed and less developed regions are revealed in figure IX. During the three decades of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the growth trajectories of population aged 65 and over in the two regions were similar. Their discrepancy started in the 1980s and the difference is projected to grow rapidly in the future. This results from the differential pace of growth. In the more developed regions, the annual increment is projected to rise at a moderate pace: about 2.5 million per year at present to about 5 million per year in 2020-2025. The annual increment will grow substantially faster in the less developed regions from about 6 million per year around 1990 to nearly 20 million per year in 2020-2025.

Figure VIII. Estimated and projected size of population aged under 15 in the more developed and the less developed regions, 1950-2025

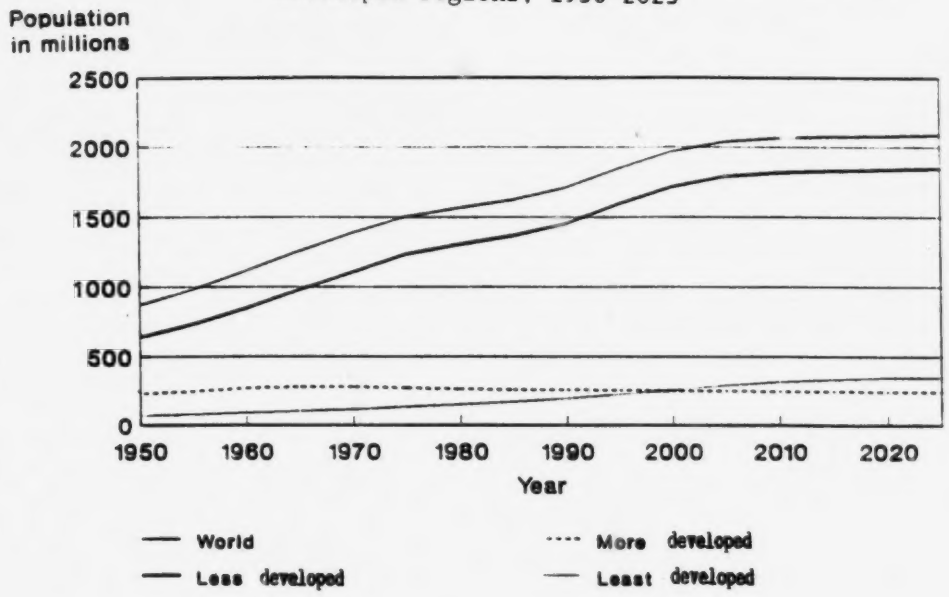
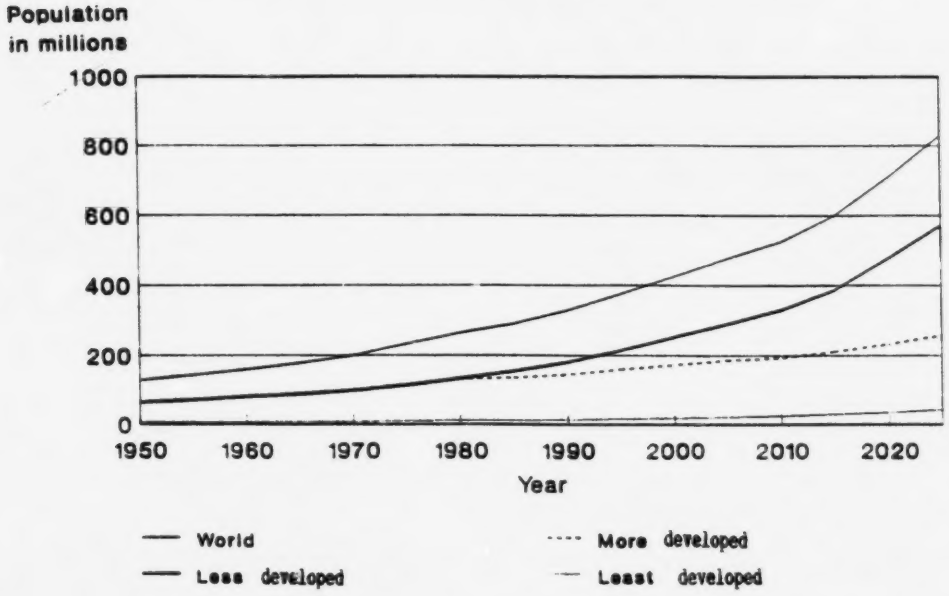


Figure IX. Estimated and projected size of population aged 65 and over in the more developed and the less developed regions, 1950-2025



II. POPULATION TRENDS AND POLICIES

A. Growth

39. The total population of the world stood at 5.3 billion persons at mid-year 1990, according to the medium variant of the 1990 revision of the United Nations population estimates and projections. During the previous 12 months, the world population grew by 91 million persons; during the next 12 months, 93 million additional persons are anticipated.

40. The world population is growing at around 1.7 per cent per year. This global population growth rate has remained nearly unchanged since 1975, but it is significantly lower than the historical peak of 2.1 per cent which occurred between 1965 and 1970.

41. The medium-variant projections indicate that the population growth rate will remain around 1.7 per cent per year for five more years until 1995, after which it will resume its downward trend, reaching 1.6 per cent in 1995-2000, and 1.5 per cent in 2000-2005. The world's population is projected to reach 6.3 billion in 2000. Hence, the annual increment to the world population, which grew from an average of 47 million between 1950 and 1955 to an average of 88 million between 1985 and 1990, is expected to continue increasing until it reaches a high of 98 million between 1995 and 2000.

42. Between 1950 and 1990 the population of the more developed regions increased by 45 per cent compared to an increase of 143 per cent for the population of the less developed regions. Within the less developed regions, the increase was 162 per cent among the least developed countries and 140 per cent among the other less developed countries. More recently, between 1985 and 1990, the average annual rate of growth was, for the medium variant, 0.5 per cent for the more developed regions, and 2.1 per cent for the less developed regions. Among the less developed regions, the growth rate was 2.8 per cent for the least developed countries and 2.0 per cent for the other less developed countries.

43. These differences are perhaps best illustrated by the relative evolutions of the average annual increments to the total population. In 1950-1955, out of a total increment to the world population of 47 million, 23 per cent originated in the more developed regions and 77 per cent in the less developed regions (7 per cent in the least developed countries and 70 per cent in the other less developed countries). During 1985-1990 the world gained an average of 88 million persons per year. However, the share from the more developed regions was only 7 per cent. Ninety-three per cent of the world population growth occurred in the less developed regions (13 per cent from the least developed and 80 per cent from the other less developed countries).

44. There are differences in growth rates also within each of the two groups of more developed and less developed regions. Among the more developed regions, for the period 1985-1990, population growth was fastest in Australia/New Zealand (1.3 per cent), followed by Northern America and the USSR (0.8 per cent each).

45. The four regions of Europe had nearly identical growth rates during 1985-1990, between 0.24 and 0.27 per cent. This change from the earlier patterns of higher growth rates in Eastern and Southern Europe than in Northern and Western Europe resulted from increases in the previously lower growth rate regions and decreases in the higher rate regions.

46. During 1950-1955, the earliest date for which the United Nations provides demographic estimates, population growth rates ranged from 2.7 per cent per year in Latin America to 2.2 per cent in Africa and 1.9 per cent in Asia (table 2). A temporary convergence in growth rates appeared during the 1965-1970 period. The population growth rate had risen sharply from the earlier period in Africa and Asia due to falling mortality rates and little or moderate fertility change. The Latin American population growth rate held steady, as crude birth and death rates fell by similar amounts. Currently, population growth rates have diverged again. The African population growth rate has risen to 3 per cent per year due to falling mortality and little fertility change; Asian and Latin American population growth rates fell to 1.9 per cent and 2.1 per cent, respectively.

Table 2. Growth rates of Africa, Asia and Latin America

	Growth rate		
	Africa	Asia	Latin America
1950-1955	2.2	1.9	2.7
1965-1970	2.6	2.4	2.6
1985-1990	3.0	1.9	2.1

Source: World Population Prospects, 1990 (United Nations publication, forthcoming).

47. As a result of differences in the projected rates of growth, the distribution of the population between the different regions of the world is expected to continue changing. The share of Europe, which declined from 16 to 9 per cent of the population of the world between 1950 and 1990, is projected to decline further to 6 per cent in 2025. Northern America and the USSR will follow a nearly identical course, each of their shares declining from 7 per cent in 1950 to 5 per cent in 1990 and 4 per cent in 2025.

48. Among the less developed regions, the share of Africa, which increased from 9 to 12 per cent between 1950 and 1990, may reach 19 per cent in 2025. The share of the world's population residing in Asia remained nearly stable at 55 per cent in 1950 and 59 per cent in 1990 and is projected to be 58 per cent in 2025. However within Asia the share of China will continue to decline, from 40 per cent of the population of Asia in 1950 to 37 per cent in 1990 and 31 per cent in 2025. The

population of India, which comprised 26 per cent of Asia's population in 1950 and 27 per cent in 1990, is projected to reach 29 per cent in 2025. The population of the other countries of Asia will increase from 36 per cent in 1990 to 40 per cent in 2025. The share of Latin America, having increased from 7 per cent in 1950 to 9 per cent in 1990, will remain nearly constant at that level until the year 2025.

49. At the beginning of the last decade of this century, 78 countries out of 171 (or 46 per cent) view their rate of growth as satisfactory. Since it was first measured around the time of the World Population Conference, 1974, this statistic has remained relatively stable, staying within a narrow range, between 44 to 49 per cent. These 78 countries constitute 30 per cent of the world's population, which is only 1 per cent greater than the corresponding figure for 1974.

50. Of the remaining 93 countries, 68 consider their rate of growth too high and 25 countries perceive their rates to be too low. The 68 countries that view their rates as too high include some of the most populous nations, and together they account for nearly two thirds of the world's population. In contrast, the 25 countries that consider their rates too low represent 5 per cent of the world's population.

51. A general indication of the intercategory changes that have occurred in government perceptions of growth rates between 1974 and 1990 is shown in table 3. One may observe that 99 of the 156 countries (63 per cent) maintained the same perception, while 37 per cent had changed their perception by 1990. Nearly 80 per cent of the countries that viewed their rate as too high in 1974 retained that perception in 1990. In contrast, slightly less than half of the countries that viewed their rates as too low in 1974 maintained that position in 1990.

Table 3. Government perceptions of the rate of population growth: 1974 versus 1989

Perception in 1974	Too low	Satisfactory	Too high	Total
Too low	19	17	3	39
Satisfactory	5	46	23	74
Too high	1	8	34	43
Total	25	71	60	156
Newly added countries	0	7	8	15

Source: Population Policy Data Bank, Population Division, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat.

52. Perceptions and policies at the global level show great diversity among regions. While 52 per cent of the countries of the developing regions view their rate of growth as too high, not a single developed country maintains that position. Thirty-one developed countries view their growth rates as satisfactory, while eight of them consider them to be too low.

53. The 68 countries of the developing regions that consider their growth rates too high represent approximately 80 per cent of the people who reside there. In contrast, 17 comparatively small developing countries believe that their growth rates are too low; the 17 represent 14 per cent of the populations living in the developing regions.

54. The distribution of the least developed countries' growth perceptions does not differ markedly from that for the developing countries as a whole. For example, 22 of those countries view their growth rates as too high; they account for approximately two thirds of the populations of the least developed countries. Several countries with relatively low growth rates (Bhutan, Equatorial Guinea and Lao People's Democratic Republic) consider their rates too low. Generally speaking, they view their populations as small relative to their country's resources and developmental goals.

B. Mortality

55. The available evidence indicates that mortality continues its global-level downward course. For the period 1985-1990, expectation of life at birth reached 63.9 years for the world as a whole, a gain of some 16.4 years since the early 1950s. The gain was largest in the developing regions as a whole, where life expectancy rose from 42.2 to 61.4 years during the past three and a half decades. In the least developed countries, the gain in life expectancy was much more limited, reaching only 49.5 years by the later 1980s. In the developed countries life expectancy rose from 66.0 to 74.0 years over the past three and a half decades.

56. At the regional level, Africa continues to lag substantially behind Asia and Latin America; life expectancy in the three regions during 1985-1990 are estimated to be 52.0, 62.7, and 66.7 years, respectively. Expectation of life at birth is about 74 years in the developed countries. The regions of Eastern Europe and the USSR have life expectancies that are 2.6 and 4 years lower than the other countries of the more developed regions.

57. Women in the more developed regions continue to have about a seven-year advantage over men in average life expectancy. For both sexes, in the more developed regions almost 70 per cent of all deaths occur among those aged 65 years and over. Infant and child mortality have declined very significantly during recent years in almost all of these countries; by the later 1980s infant mortality was below 10 deaths per 1,000 live births in all except the Eastern European countries and the USSR. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), of the approximately 11.7 million deaths that occur annually in the developed countries, some 3.3 million are due to heart disease, 1.9 million to cancer, 1.5 million to stroke, and 0.9 million to respiratory disease. Some 0.75 million annual deaths

are due to violent causes, including 170,000 from motor vehicle accidents and at least 130,000 from suicide.

58. The more detailed analysis of mortality trends in the developing countries continues to be impeded by inadequate data, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. However, among the 24 countries of Africa for which reasonably reliable direct estimates of mortality can be made for a date in 1980 or later, infant mortality rates above 60 deaths per 1,000 live births are found in all cases except Mauritius, Réunion and the Seychelles (where the rate is below 25) and in Tunisia and Botswana (where it was about 50 in the mid 1980s). Rates of over 140 in the 1980s continue to be reported for a small number of countries, especially in Western Africa. Under-five mortality rates (deaths of children less than 5 years of age per 1,000 live births) during the 1980s in these 24 countries range from a low of 16 recorded in Réunion to a high of 275 in Mali; it was over 100 in 16 of the countries.

59. In Latin America, where data on mortality are substantially better than in Africa or Asia, infant mortality rates over 100 were reported in only two countries, Haiti and Bolivia, for the later 1980s. Eight countries had achieved infant mortality rates below 20. Under-five mortality rates also were below 100 in almost all of the countries.

60. Progress in mortality reduction has been quite uneven in Asia. Among the countries where reliable direct estimates are available, infant mortality rates of 20 or lower have been attained in Hong Kong, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore, Bahrain, Cyprus, Israel, and Kuwait. At the other extreme, infant mortality was measured at over 100 at various times after 1980 in several countries of Southern Asia - Bangladesh, the Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan. Recent direct measures of under-five mortality are not as widely available as for infant mortality, but those that exist show as wide a range. Under-five mortality was measured at below 10 in Hong Kong in 1987 but as high as 195 in Bangladesh in 1985.

61. Although the data are far from ideal for the less developed regions in general, WHO has prepared a set of estimates that provide a broad indication of patterns of cause of death. Of the approximately 38 million annual deaths estimated to have occurred during the later 1980s, 45 per cent were due to infectious and parasitic diseases (compared to less than 5 per cent in the developed countries). Diseases of the circulatory system and cancer accounted for 17 and just less than 7 per cent, respectively.

62. Maternal mortality has declined to the point where it is a rare event in the developed countries. With the exception of Romania and the USSR, maternal mortality rates have averaged well below 8 per 100,000 live births, by the later 1980s. On the other hand, in the less developed regions in general, a WHO estimate prepared in the mid 1980s for major world regions was that maternal mortality for the less developed countries in general was about 450 per 100,000 live births. Rates over 600 were found for most of sub-Saharan Africa and for Southern Asia. The rates were estimated to be less than 300 for all major regions of Latin America and were about 55 for Eastern Asia. Some individual countries of the less developed regions with reliable statistics recorded rates near or equal to those found for the more developed regions. In Latin America, rates between 15 in

Puerto Rico and 55 in Argentina were directly recorded, with Barbados, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Panama and Uruguay within that range. Among the developing countries of Asia, a low of 1.9 was reported in Kuwait in 1987, with Israel, Hong Kong and Singapore all below 7.

63. The acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) continues to be a major policy concern in many developed countries and in some regions of Africa. WHO estimates that there are as many as 1 million persons in Africa infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and that 30 per cent of them will evolve into AIDS cases during the next few years. The countries most affected are Burundi, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire and Zambia. There were reported to be some 5,500 cases in the Caribbean, 3,700 in Canada and 132,400 in the United States of America as of mid 1990. For Europe as a whole, there were an estimated 35,000 cases. In Asia, WHO estimates that fewer than 100,000 persons are infected with HIV, and now there are less than 1,000 cases of AIDS.

64. In the low-mortality countries, chronic degenerative diseases are generally the principal policy concern. Increasing attention is given to the promotion of healthy lifestyles and to modifying behaviour that has a detrimental impact on health, such as smoking, substance abuse, and an unhealthy diet. Increased attention is given to health aspects of environmental protection. Education and mass screening programmes to enhance early detection of chronic diseases are widely promoted. Finally, measures intended to reduce socio-economic differentials in access to and use of health services have been taken in an increasing number of countries.

65. In the higher mortality countries, major attention remains on infectious diseases. Particular attention is given to the health needs of more vulnerable members of society, especially women and children. A broad range of quantitative health goals for specific subpopulations and for many specific diseases have been set at the national, regional and global levels.

C. Fertility

66. For the world as a whole, estimates of total fertility indicate a continuing decline, from 3.6 births per woman for the period 1980-1985 to 3.45 for 1985-1990. However, the pace of decline has decelerated; the proportionate decline during the 1980s, 4.2 per cent, was only two thirds that of the decline that took place between the later 1970s and the early 1980s. The slowdown in the rate of decline at the global level is virtually all due to the end of the decline in fertility in China, where total fertility had dropped to just over 2.4 during the early 1980s and then rose very slightly during the later 1980s.

67. In general, the global fertility level is largely determined by the experience of the developing regions, which in 1985-1990 had a total fertility rate of 3.9 as compared to 1.89 for the developed regions. The corresponding rates for 1980-1985 for the developing and developed regions were 4.2 and 1.93, respectively. Most of the decline recorded for the global level is the result of reductions in total fertility that occurred in Asia (apart from China) and in Latin America.

68. The least developed countries experienced a slight decline in total fertility, from 6.4 to just less than 6.2 births per woman during the 1980s. This decline was thus about 3.4 per cent, a little more than half that of all less developed countries.

69. In Africa also, total fertility remains above six births per woman and shows negligible change in all subregions except North and Southern Africa. The countries of North Africa were estimated to have an aggregate total fertility of just slightly over five for the 1985-1990 period and experienced a decline of nearly 10 per cent during the preceding five years. In Southern Africa, total fertility reached 4.7 and had declined by just over 5 per cent during the same period. Eastern and Western Africa share the distinction of having the highest total fertility rates in the world in the 1985-1990 period - 6.85 births per woman.

70. Total fertility in Asia declined from 3.7 to 3.5 from the early to the later 1980s, with substantial reductions in all subregions except Eastern Asia. The largest decline was in South-Eastern Asia - nearly 14 per cent.

71. In Latin America the pace of fertility decline remained slightly changed from the later 1970s through the later 1980s. Total fertility reached 3.55 births per woman in the period 1985-1990. The decline continues to be most rapid in the subregion of Central America, where it is still highest.

72. There is evidence of a very slight but sustained rise in total fertility in Northern Europe and a stabilization in Western Europe. Rapid decline (by 12.6 per cent from the early to the later 1980s) continues in Southern Europe. Southern and Western Europe now share the lowest total fertility levels in the world, just less than 1.6 in the later 1980s.

73. Despite declining global fertility rates, the total number of births each year continues to rise because of the high proportions of women in the child-bearing years. During the period 1975-1980, there were about 121 million births per year; by 1985-1990, the number of births per year has risen to about 138 million births annually, an increase of 14 per cent.

74. A particular aspect of child-bearing behaviour to which increased attention has been given during recent years is adolescent fertility. A recently completed review by the United Nations of adolescent fertility in 59 developing countries, where trend data over the 1970s and 1980s are available, shows a decline in 44 countries and a rise in the other 15. With only a few exceptions, the increases tended to be small while the declines were somewhat larger.

75. An examination of trends in abortion, based on the experience reported for 29 countries where it is legal, suggested an overall levelling off. During the later 1970s, the ratio of abortions to live births was rising in 22 of the 27 countries; for the period 1980-1987, the ratio was falling in 14 of the 29. Moreover, in a majority of those countries where the ratio was still rising during the 1980s, the pace of the increase was slower than it had been during the later 1970s.

76. Contraceptive usage around the world continues to increase substantially. Prevalence during recent years increased by at least 1 percentage point per year in two thirds of the developing countries where data were available, and by at least 2.0 percentage points annually in one fourth of the countries. In the developed countries, contraceptive usage levels in most cases were stable or increased slightly from levels that were already high.

77. There was, of course, considerable variation among regions. Contraceptive prevalence remains significantly lower in sub-Saharan Africa than elsewhere, typically with less than 6 per cent of married women of reproductive age using a modern method. However, there are also several countries in the region where there is good evidence of a recent rise in use of a modern method to more than 15 per cent - in Botswana, Kenya, Swaziland, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Use levels are also moderate and rising in Northern Africa. Yet, for Africa as a whole, the average prevalence of use of any contraceptive method is estimated at only 14 per cent, as compared to 49 per cent in the developing countries of Asia (35 per cent for countries other than China), 56 per cent in Latin America and 71 per cent for developed countries. Within Asia, although there are still some countries where contraceptive practice is uncommon, in 10 of 21 countries more than one fourth of couples of reproductive age are currently using a modern method, with the percentage reaching 70 or more in China, Hong Kong and the Republic of Korea. In 30 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, prevalence of a modern method is at least 25 per cent in all but five countries.

78. Sterilization continues to be the method used by more than one third of all couples. The intrauterine device is chosen by just less than one fifth, the contraceptive pill by about 1 in 7, and the condom by 1 in 10 couples.

79. As of 1990, 95 countries, with 71 per cent of the world's population, reported that they view their current level of fertility as either too high or too low. Twenty-one of those countries, with 6 per cent of the world's total population, view the fertility rate as too low, while 74 countries (66 per cent of the world's total population) report that it is too high. The remaining 75 countries consider current fertility to be satisfactory.

80. In 67 countries, Governments do not intervene directly to influence fertility rates; in 61 countries they intervene to lower the rate; 19 countries intervene to maintain it and 21 countries have programmes intended to raise their fertility rate. In 1990, six countries restricted access to contraceptive methods, 18 provided no support, 17 countries gave indirect support and 129 provided direct support.

81. More than one half of all the less developed countries (74 countries) consider their rate of fertility to be too high; however, not a single country in the more developed region voices a similar concern. Among more developed countries, 11 have policies to raise the rate of fertility, 7 countries intervene to maintain the rate and 21 feel that intervention is not called for. Out of a total of 131 less developed countries, 10 have policies in place to raise fertility, 12 intervene to maintain the rate, 63 countries have policies to lower the rate and 46 countries do

not intervene. Among the 41 least developed countries, 18 intervene to lower the rate, 3 to maintain the rate, 1 to raise the rate, and 19 have a policy of non-intervention.

82. There have not been a great many major changes in policy recorded during the two years since the previous report on the monitoring of world population trends was prepared. In Africa, Cameroon and Zambia have moved from a policy of non-intervention to one intended to lower fertility; Togo has shifted from a policy of maintaining fertility at its existing level to one of non-intervention. In Latin America, Antigua and Barbuda reports that it now considers fertility to have reached a satisfactory level and that it no longer intervenes to lower the rate. Three Asian countries modified their policies during the past two years. Kuwait reports that it has changed its view of the fertility level from too low to satisfactory, although it still promotes higher fertility among members of the national population. The United Arab Emirates no longer seeks to raise fertility and now has a policy of non-intervention. In its first five-year development plan, for the period 1989-1993, the Government of Iran announced that it views its current fertility rate as too high. The Government has announced a programme intended to reduce total fertility from its estimated current level of just over five to four by around the year 2010. Two shifts were reported in Europe. In Sweden, which has participated in the rise of fertility observed in a number of Northern European countries, fertility is now viewed as satisfactory, whereas it was previously viewed as too low. The Government of Italy, on the other hand, views its now very low fertility as unsatisfactory.

D. Internal distribution

83. At mid 1990, 45 per cent (2.4 billion) of the world's population lived in urban areas; 37 per cent (1.5 billion) of the less developed regions and 73 per cent (0.9 billion) of the more developed regions were urban dwellers.

84. United Nations projections indicate that the level of urbanization for the world as a whole is expected to increase to 51 per cent in the year 2000 and 65 per cent in 2025. The corresponding figures for the less developed regions are 45 per cent in the year 2000 and 61 per cent in 2025. The more developed regions are projected to be 75 per cent urban in the year 2000 and 83 per cent urban in 2025.

85. During 1985-1990, the urban population growth rate was 3.1 per cent per year for the world (4.5 per cent in the less developed regions and 0.8 per cent in the more developed regions). The urban population growth rate peaked for the less developed regions in 1980-1985 (at 4.6 per cent) and for the more developed regions in 1955-1960 (at 2.5 per cent), and the rate of urban population growth is now declining in both areas. Nevertheless, the urban population growth rate for the world as a whole has continued to rise through 1990. This apparent anomaly is due to the changing distribution of the world's population towards the less developed regions which exhibit faster urban and total population growth rates.

86. The less developed regions are in the process of a rapid urbanization, a process that is projected to continue for decades to come. In 1975, 26 per cent of the population of the less developed regions lived in urban areas. From 1975 to 1990, the urban population of the less developed regions increased by 92 per cent (an average growth rate of 4.4 per cent per year). From 1990 to 2025, the population of urban areas is projected to increase threefold (289 per cent) and by 2025, 4.4 billion persons are expected to be urban residents.

87. The least developed countries exhibit urbanization characteristics notably different from the other countries of the less developed regions. In 1990, only 20 per cent of the population of the least developed countries lived in urban areas compared to 39 per cent in the other countries of the less developed regions. The least developed countries are projected to be still only 26 per cent urban by the year 2000 and 44 per cent by 2025.

88. Different from that of the more developed regions, urbanization in the less developed regions is characterized by heterogeneity. The urban share ranges from 23 per cent in less developed Oceania to 72 per cent in Latin America (figure X). The regional diversity is projected to persist to the end of the century before beginning to decline.

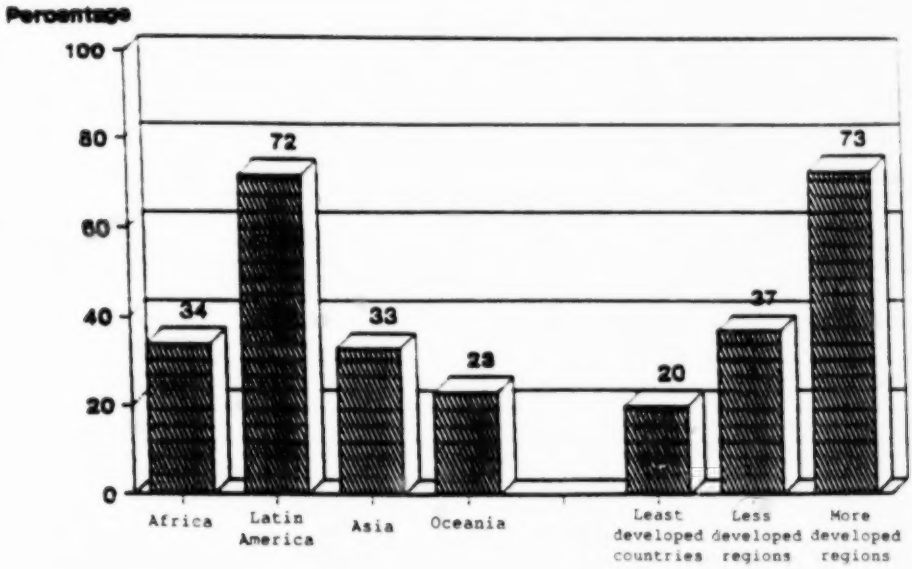
89. From 1985 to 1990, the urban population of the less developed regions grew at an average annual growth rate of 4.5 per cent per year, more than twice the rate of the urban and rural populations combined (2.1 per cent). This rate of urban growth is slightly lower than that of the previous five-year period, when it was 4.6 per cent per year. This decline takes its significance not from the trivial difference of 0.1 per cent, but from the reversal of a trend of rising urban growth rates for the less developed regions since 1960. The urban population growth rate for the less developed regions is projected to decline monotonically in the future, to 3.7 per cent per year in 1995-2000 and to 2.2 per cent in 2020-2025. At the same time, it should be recalled that the projected deceleration in the rate of growth of the urban populations, which largely reflects a decline in the rate of growth of the total population, does not imply a corresponding deceleration in the rate of increase in the proportions urban of the various countries. Rural-to-urban migration is expected to continue.

90. In 1990, 63 per cent of the population of the less developed regions resided in rural areas. Two thirds of the population of Africa and Asia and three quarters of the population of Oceania are rural. Latin America is the only major area among the less developed regions that is predominantly urban.

91. Because of this extremely large population base in rural areas, many countries find themselves in the position of having to absorb large rural populations at the same time as they struggle with rapid urbanization.

92. During 1985-1990, rural populations in the less developed regions increased at an average rate of 0.8 per cent per year. The rural population growth rate has been declining since 1965-1970 (during which it averaged 2.2 per cent per year) and is projected to continue to decline in the future. The rural growth rate is projected to turn negative after 2015. Rural areas have been losing population in the more developed regions since 1950.

Figure X. Percentage of total population living in urban areas, 1990



93. A significant proportion of the urban population of the world resides in large urban agglomerations. In 1990, 33 per cent of the world's urban population resided in agglomerations containing 1 million or more inhabitants and 13 per cent resided in agglomerations of 5 million or more.

94. Between 1985 and 1990, the population of Mexico City surpassed that of Tokyo/Yokohama and became the largest urban agglomeration in the world. The United Nations estimates that Mexico City had 20.2 million inhabitants in 1990, exceeding the populations of Tokyo (18.1 million), Sao Paulo (17.4 million) and New York (16.2 million) (table 4).

Table 4. Ten largest urban agglomerations in the world, 1975 and 1990

Agglomeration	1975 population (millions)	Agglomeration	1990 population (millions)
1. Tokyo	16.4	1. Mexico City	20.2
2. New York	15.9	2. Tokyo	18.1
3. Mexico	11.6	3. Sao Paulo	17.4
4. Shanghai	11.4	4. New York	16.2
5. Sao Paulo	9.9	5. Shanghai	13.4
6. Buenos Aires	9.1	6. Los Angeles	11.9
7. Los Angeles	8.9	7. Calcutta	11.8
8. Paris	8.6	8. Buenos Aires	11.5
9. Beijing	8.5	9. Bombay	11.2
10. London	8.2	10. Seoul	11.0

Source: World Urbanization Prospects, 1990 (United Nations publication, forthcoming).

95. The population growth rate of the large urban agglomerations has generally been declining. Nevertheless, the average annual growth rate during 1985-1990 is above 3 per cent per year in 12 of the 34 urban agglomerations containing 5 million or more persons. However, in only three (Sao Paulo, Mexico City and Bombay) of 12 agglomerations with 10 million or more persons do population growth rates reach 3 per cent per year.

96. Urban agglomerations of the more developed regions are generally growing at a slower pace than those in the less developed regions. Nine of the 11 urban agglomerations in the more developed regions, with 5 million inhabitants or more in

1990, grew at a rate under 1 per cent per year during 1985-1990. Among the less developed regions, all 23 urban agglomerations of 5 million or more grew by over 1 per cent per year during 1985-1990; in fact, 19 grew by over 2 per cent per year and 13 grew by over 3 per cent.

97. In 1990, only 33 Governments out of the total of 170 Member States and observer nations considered their patterns of population distribution to be satisfactory. Nearly half (15) of those countries were more developed. In contrast, 79 Governments, 94 per cent of which were in the less developed regions, considered that their patterns of population distribution required major change. The desire for major change was expressed by 71 per cent of Governments in Africa, 73 per cent of Governments in Latin America and 32 per cent of Governments in Asia. Among the least developed countries, 61 per cent of Governments desired major changes in their patterns of population distribution. Fifty-eight Governments - 49 per cent of the Governments in the more developed countries and 30 per cent of those in the less developed countries - desired minor changes in their patterns of population distribution.

98. In regard to Governments' policies relating to internal migration, 67 - representing 28 per cent of the Governments in the more developed countries - have adopted policies designed to decelerate migration flows. Forty-eight Governments - 26 per cent of those in the more developed countries and 29 per cent of those in the less developed countries - have adopted policies to reverse migration flows.

99. A large number of Governments in all world regions continue to want to slow primate city, or metropolitan; growth and to promote small towns and intermediate cities and develop rural areas to retain or attract rural population. In recent years, however, implementation of a number of more costly population distribution policies - such as relocation of national capital cities, promotion of counter-magnets, establishment of new towns, and land colonization - have been abandoned or cut back as a result of adverse economic conditions.

E. International migration

100. The late 1980s witnessed the resurgence of international migration as an important demographic phenomenon, especially for countries in which low rates of natural increase prevail. Among the traditional countries of immigration, the United States admitted over 3 million permanent immigrants during 1985-1989 and by the end of the decade had already legalized a further 460,000 persons who had entered earlier without documentation. In Europe, the 12 member States of the European Community were estimated to be hosting over 13 million foreign citizens, nearly 60 per cent of whom originated outside the Community. Although most of the countries in Europe hosting significant proportions of foreigners have adopted policies promoting the stabilization of the foreign population in their territories, the statistical evidence available suggests that the foreign population originating outside Europe is growing faster than that of European origin. This assessment does not take into account the increasing number of Eastern European migrants of German origin who, once admitted by the Federal Republic of Germany, become German citizens. In 1989 alone, over 720,000 such migrants arrived in the Federal Republic, 48 per cent of whom were from the German

Democratic Republic. Thus, although the reunification of Germany is expected to reduce the size of such international migration flows, the potential for substantial influxes of Eastern Europeans to Western Europe, and particularly to Germany, still exists. 1/

101. The general relaxation of travel and emigration regulations in the countries of Eastern Europe that accompanied the political and economic changes taking place in the region has led to important migrant outflows that have been at least partly responsible for the growth of the number of asylum-seekers in other European countries. In addition, efficient and cheap transportation coupled with the proliferation of regional conflict has contributed to increasing the presence of asylum-seekers from developing countries in the developed world. Most of the 200,000 asylum requests that have been filed annually in Europe during 1985-1989 can be attributed to such processes.

102. Although the recent events in Western Asia have already changed drastically the migration dynamics in the region, by the late 1980s the member States of the Gulf Co-operation Council were hosting a very sizeable foreign population, estimated at 7.2 million in 1985. Evidence from the main labour-exporting countries of South and South-East Asia suggests that the inflows of migrant workers to Western Asia declined during the late 1980s, a trend that will certainly be exacerbated by the crisis now affecting the region.

103. Almost no new information is available regarding non-refugee migration in Africa and Latin America. The main developments in both regions concerned refugees. Indeed, at the world level the number of refugees increased by nearly 75 per cent during the 1980s, rising from 8.5 million in 1980 to 14.5 million in 1989.

104. Most Governments report that they perceive the level of immigration and emigration in their countries as satisfactory. Among 170 countries surveyed, 128 perceived immigration as satisfactory and slightly fewer, 126, viewed emigration as satisfactory. Concerns over immigration and emigration are shared only by a limited number of Governments: only 36 perceive immigration or emigration levels as excessively high. Only a very small number of countries view immigration and emigration levels as too low: six and nine countries, respectively. Regarding policy responses towards immigration, most countries have either a policy of maintaining the current inflows of migrants stable (74 countries) or a policy of non-intervention (33 countries). Most of the remaining countries wish to reduce the levels of immigration (54 countries). Only nine countries had policies to increase immigration. Broadly the same pattern can be discerned for emigration policies: 70 countries wish to maintain current emigration levels, and 52 do not intervene; 42 countries want to reduce emigration. Increasing emigration levels is reported to be a policy concern by only six countries.

105. The proportion of Governments perceiving immigration levels as too high is only slightly higher among the developed countries (23 per cent) than among either all developing countries (21 per cent) or the least developed countries (20 per cent). However, a marked association exists between the level of development and perceptions of emigration: Governments of developing countries and

of the least developed countries tend to be less satisfied with emigration levels and view those levels as too high (24 and 22 per cent, respectively). Ninety per cent of the developed countries describe their emigration levels as satisfactory.

106. Differences between countries at different levels of development are more clearly reflected in their respective policy responses towards migration than in their reported perceptions. The proportion of Governments wishing to reduce immigration levels is twice as high among developed countries as among the least developed (figure XI). While the Government's concerns about immigration tend to increase with the country's level of development, high emigration levels are of greater concern to the developing countries (figure XII). Almost 30 per cent of the least developed countries and less than 20 per cent of the developed countries wish to reduce emigration.

107. At the regional level, concerns over immigration are most widespread in Europe. About 29 per cent of the European countries view immigration levels as excessive, compared to 21 per cent world wide, and almost one in two European countries intends to reduce the level of immigration, compared to 32 per cent for all countries in the world. Concerns over immigration are concentrated among the 12 member States of the European Community and other countries in Western Europe. New migrants have continued to arrive as asylum-seekers or refugees, as migrants from Eastern Europe, in the framework of family reunification or as undocumented migrants. Whereas family reunification is widely accepted for humanitarian reasons, the motives of asylum-seekers have been increasingly questioned by Governments. Instead of being considered as genuine refugees, asylum-seekers are often viewed as economic migrants and measures have been introduced to reduce their access to asylum. In addition, countries of the region, especially in Southern Europe, have taken a number of measures to control the entry and stay of undocumented migrants.

108. Many of the concerns identified by the European Governments with international migration are not seen to be most effectively dealt with at the national level. Hence, a growing number of measures have been co-ordinated internationally. With the prospect of the opening of the borders between member States of the European Community by 1 January 1993, their Governments have been active in harmonizing their respective migration and refugee policies.

109. In Africa, perceptions of migration levels among Governments tend to be similar: more than three quarters of the countries in the region consider both immigration and emigration levels satisfactory, and slightly more than one fifth view immigration as too high. Emigration is considered to be too high by just 15 per cent of African Governments.

110. The proportion of Governments having policies to regulate immigration is lower in Africa (71 per cent) than in any other region. At the same time, it should be stressed that the African region is by no means homogeneous with respect to international migration policies. Major labour-sending and labour-receiving countries in Africa differ considerably in their policies, with countries that attract foreign labour often being concerned about the influx of undocumented migrants (for example, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon and Nigeria).

Figure XI. Immigration policies according to level of development

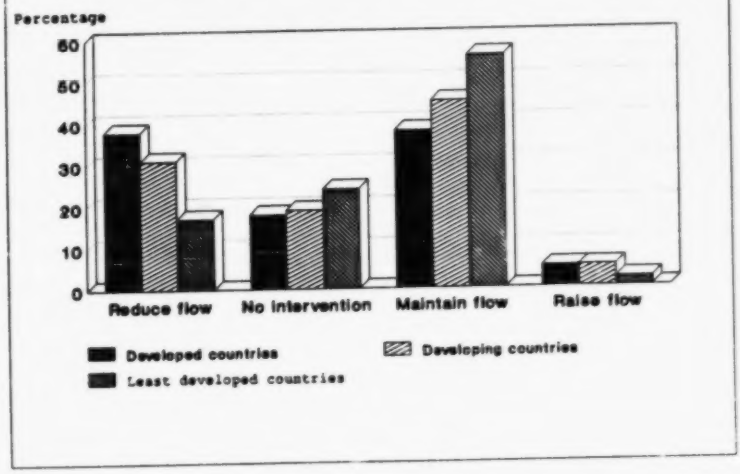
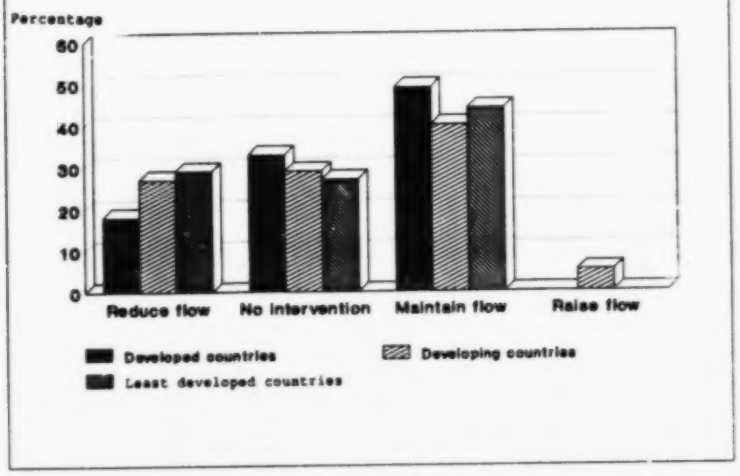


Figure XII. Emigration policies according to level of development



111. In Latin America, the view that immigration is too low is three times more common (12 per cent) than among all countries (4 per cent). Similarly, some 15 per cent of the Latin American countries seek to increase immigration, whereas for all countries the figure is only 5 per cent. Conversely, levels of emigration are more often perceived as too high in Latin America (42 per cent) than in the world as a whole (21 per cent), and policies to reduce emigration are widespread (42 per cent).

112. In Asia, government intervention in the regulation of international migration is common: relatively few countries in the region report no intervention with respect to either immigration or emigration. Perceptions and policies tend to vary considerably among Asian countries. Eleven per cent perceive emigration as too low, and 24 per cent as too high.

113. Migration concerns vary greatly between the subregions of Asia. Thus, immigration is often perceived as too high by the oil-producing countries of Western Asia, and policies to reduce immigration are widespread. On the other hand, emigration is viewed as too low by major labour-sending countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, Jordan, Pakistan and Turkey, most of whom seek to increase it.

114. In Oceania, Governments generally perceive both immigration and emigration levels as satisfactory, and maintaining them at their prevailing level is the most common goal. Yet, Samoa, for instance, considers immigration to be too high, and Australia aims at increasing immigration. New Zealand is exceptional in the region in that it considers emigration to be too high. A few countries in Oceania have taken specific measures to control migration. Tonga, for instance, introduced new visa requirements for Indian citizens in 1988 in an effort to restrict their entry and stay in the country, and Vanuatu has been granting temporary work permits to foreigners who can contribute significantly to its economic development.

Notes

1/ With effect from 3 October 1990 the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic united to form one sovereign State under the designation "Germany". The data in the present report were compiled before the unification.